liable to pay the Property Tax from the date of possession thereof. In regard to the tax liability for the period between the Asian Games and the date of handing over of possession, a decision is yet to be taken.

Abolition of contract labour in FCI

855. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of contract labour employed in the storage depots and other departments of Food Corporation of India;

(b) whether their is any proposal under Government's consideration to abolish the contract labour system in Food Corporation of India; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The foodgrain handling operations in FCI depots vary from season to season and even day to day. Generally these are carried out through service contractors who employ their own labour as per the requirement and periodical work indent. Therefore the number of labourers keep on varying from time to time.

(b) and (c) The question of abolition of contract labour system in food storage depots, of the FCI is under consideration of the Union Ministry of Labour on the directives of the Supreme Court in a writ petition filed by the FCI Workers Union.

Taking over of possession of foodgrains from Punjab by FCI

856. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the normal period during which the FCI takes over the possession of foodgrains purchased on its behalf by the State organisations in Punjab markets;

(b) whether it is a fact that any delay in this process beyond three-four days cause many problems, disputes and wastages; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to ensure quick transfer of stocks and speedy movement of foodgrains from Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The takeover of foodgrains by the Food Corporation of India from the State agencies in Punjab is a continuous process and the quantities taken over depend upon the volume of stocks, available storage, movement capacity and other related factors. The State agencies are expected to procure grains that conform to specifications and maintain them in good condition. They are reimbursed all reasonable expenses on storage and maintenance for the period the grains procured are held by them. It is the endeavour of the Food Corporation of India to take over such stocks as expeditiously as possible. The movement of foodgrains from Punjab, which was 9.15 lakh tonnes in December, 1986, went up to over 12.00 lakh tonnes in March, 1987.

Drought relief to Kerala

857. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the acute drought situation in Kerala;

(b) whether the Kerala State Government has submitted any memorandum to the Central Government seeking for an immediate drought relief assistance of Rs. 138 crores; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction therto?